when it first became known, perhaps the most popular English song was "The Death of Nelson" : this was the production of John Braham, formerly a choir-boy in the Great Synagogue. In the same tradition was "A Life on the Ocean Wave", composed (with "Cheer, boys, cheer", and hundreds of less-known songs) by Henry Russell, a professing Jew. It is not suggested for one moment that these productions are to be numbered among the masterpieces of modern literature: but they demonstrate in a remarkable fashion the manner in which the Jew has identified himself with the literary heritage of the country, at its most typical as well as at its best.

§v

The German Jewish literary tradition, as has been indicated, dates back to the Middle Ages, to Siisskind von Trimberg and Samson Pine and Johannes Pauli. How far this literature might have developed but for the virulent persecution which raged at the close of the Middle Ages, it is impossible to say. The improvement in German Jewish conditions in the middle of the eighteenth century witnessed, however, a revival, associated with the name of Moses Mendelssohn—a yet more important figure in German than in Jewish literary life, though the fact is often overlooked: for it was by his contributions to German letters generally that he first came to the fore and achieved a reputation in intellectual

circles, subsequently to be echoed in his own community.

His first important independent work, *Letters on Sentiment* (1755), virtually founded modern German philosophic-aesthetic criticism. His *Phaedon*—one of the most important contributions to pre-Kantian ethics—was the most widely read book of its time in Germany, no less for the subject-matter than for the limpid style,